

THE

Midnight star

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT AL BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER DEVOTED
TO 'WEIRD AL' YANKOVIC

VOLUME 1, NO. 1

JANUARY '93



THE MIDNIGHT STAR is a non-profit, quarterly newsletter devoted to Weird Al Yankovic, brought to you by AL'S PALS and PLS PRODUCTIONS. Yearly dues are \$5.00 for domestic subscriptions, \$7.00 for international, covering the cost of printing and mailing only. Any and all submissions eagerly welcomed.

.... many thanks to George Newman and associates.

Cover artwork by Wrenne Hazard, one of our very first subscribers, from Ruxton, Maryland. Wrenne says she has always had trouble drawing Al's hair, so since he wears a lot of Hawaiian shirts, she decided to give him what she calls "AL-OHA" Hawaiian hair. We think it's great!

AL - TWO LETTERS JUST DON'T SAY IT ALL



AL'S PALS is responsible for THE MIDNIGHT STAR the informational newsletter for "Weird Al" Yankovic. We are a non-profit group devoted solely to spreading the word about the 'Grand Master' "WEIRD AL".

AL'S PALS officers

Our Fearless Leader

Semi-Fearless Leader

Put-Upon Lowly Scribe

Head Money-Launderer

Covert Researcher

Pamala Ritchie

Carlotta Barnes

Carol 'Mac' McGuire

Lois Ritchie

Bonita Crider

Cheerleaders

Howard Rubin

Debbie Lacy

Sue Wells

Brandon Lacy

A LETTER FROM OUR FEARLESS LEADER

Hi and welcome to Volume 1, No. 1 - or in other words, the very first issue - of THE MIDNIGHT STAR! To introduce ourselves, let me say that this is an info/newsletter for the fans of "Weird Al" Yankovic. Someone who has done so much for so many for so little really deserves a special publication all his own (do I sound biased?).

In any event, I would like to make this brief (to start with - I'll find out if power corrupts ha-ha-ha-ha). This infoletter will let you subscribers know what Al and company are up to, would like to be up to, etc. And in the course of things we also want, need and beg your input. Because this newsletter will also be for the fans - to share your views, creative projects, funny events, or anything you'd like as long as it is related to Al or anything he's done. For instance!

Do you write fan fiction? Try your hand at a short story, poem, filk song, drawing.

Are you good with your hands? Let us know about it. Have you made anything like a doll, sculpture, shadowbox? Share it with us.

Ever met Al and/or the band at a concert? At the mall? In the street? Give us the lowdown.

Ever do anything totally dumb and stupid? Inquiring minds would love to know about it (your anonymity will be respected to protect the guilty).

Do you like to cook? Odd and unusual culinary 'delights' (like the infamous twinkle/wiener sandwich) would be fun to try out.

In other words, please write to us and add to this newsletter. THE MIDNIGHT STAR will only be as good as you will help to make it. Wanna see your name in print? As Bob Barker would say, "Come on Down!"

Ladies and gentlemen, thanks for subscribing, and Let The Adventure Begin.

Pam Ritchie

THE BIRTH OF A NEWSLETTER - FROM OUR SEMI-FEARLESS LEADER

This newsletter was born August 14, 1992, in the hot Texas sun while we were waiting six hours for the concert to begin at Houston's Astroworld. At first, everyone looked uncertainly at each other. Pre-teens and teenagers wondered why people old enough to be their parents were at a Weird Al concert, while longtime fans (a.k.a. 'adults') were shocked, shocked that younger people were also interested in Weird Al.

Maybe it was the heat, or the humidity, or the fact that you couldn't leave for fear that you'd lose your place in line, but we all became friends that day. There we were, dozens of people of every age, sex, race or income tax bracket who knew every word to Al's songs and had watched even his most obscure TV appearance. Most everyone had been at Al's previous Houston concert two months before, and some of us had been at Astroworld when he'd opened for the Monkees years ago! Everyone was so happy to see that he or she was not the only Weird Al fan in the world.

I credit my "Off The Deep End Tour" t-shirt for helping me locate even more Al fans in the past few months. (If you have one of the t-shirts yourself, you know what I mean; You will be stopped by fellow Al fans every time you wear the shirt in public). Devoted Weird Al fans are everywhere – from the cashier at the local supermarket who, upon seeing my t-shirt, was furious because he realized he had missed not one but two Weird Al concerts in Houston in 1992, to the lady at the upscale Beverly Center in Los Angeles who stopped me to say how sweet Weird Al had been when she met him in Las Vegas.

Why would normal women like us invest so much time producing this newsletter? Everyone has her reasons. For my part, Al's worth the effort. He sings about the things that really matter in life – old science-fiction films, classic television shows, and food!

Carlotta Barnes

SNIPPETS

In a recent interview, MacCauley Culkin, of *Home Alone* fame, was asked "What is your favorite movie?" His immediate reply was *UHF*!

Al is currently in the studio cutting a new album with a projected release date of Summer, 1993. Al will tour in support of the new album with scattered, sporadic dates before the actual release.

AWACS Advanced Warning of Al's Coming Shows. This newsletter will try to keep you updated on Al's Concert Schedule. A good deal of the time, however, we probably won't have the most recent changes and additions. If you'd like to be apprised of the MOST up-to-date info, please send us a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) to keep on file, and when we get the latest news, we'll send it along to you!

During his most recent appearance on *Arsenio*, Al was asked how he felt about Rap music. He replied: "Well, Rock music was invented for kids who couldn't sing very well....Rap was invented for kids who couldn't sing at all!"

TV Guide's crossword puzzle for the week of September 12, 1992 included this clue: 23 Down: "Pacino and Yankovic"

There is an unconfirmed rumor floating about that Al is a 'gamer'. I wouldn't want my favorite characters caught in a game of Dungeons and Dragons with Al as the Dungeon Master!

Comedian Rip Taylor, known for his trademark confetti-tossing, was showered with the stuff as his star was unveiled on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. "He's done more for the confetti industry than anyone else I know," said *Weird Al* Yankovic, one of the few celebrity onlookers. (Thanks to THE HOUSTON POST, October 17, 1992)

During Al's appearance on *Regis and Kathie Lee*, Regis asked him why he turned to music instead of pursuing his college major of Architecture. Al replied "Well, I think that most people who don't make it in Architecture end up in music."

During a recent *David Letterman* show, David stopped during his monologue and pointed up into the audience, shouting, "There's the winner of the 'Weird Al' Yankovic look-alike contest!" The camera found the man up in the crowd. He had the hair and the mustache and when he saw himself on camera he laughed as hard as anybody.

GRAMMY TIME

It's Grammy Awards time again, and Al has been nominated for Best Comedy Album. The Grammys will be awarded Wednesday, February 24th, 1993.

SPOTTED ALS

Al was spotted on KTRK, Channel 13, Houston, January 1st, 1993, on *Good Morning Houston*. The show used clips from his video *Eat It* interspersed with their clips of various things that had happened on the show during the past year.

Rush Limbaugh's radio show January 4th, '93. Rush once again played *Spatula City*.

Regis and Kathie Lee hosted a re-edited version of their show (airing on Jan 22, 1993) showing clips of past shows where Grammy-nominated artists had appeared. Al's first move after coming on was to swing his leg up behind his head and dance about on one foot. The clip showed a piece of Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* and then a clip of Al's *Smells Like Nirvana*. At the end of the show, they wrapped it all up by mentioning Al's most recent Grammy nomination for Best Comedy Album..

Please help us out by adding your Al spotings to our list!

THE AL IQ TEST

1. Al has parodied all but one of these performers. Which one has he not parodied?
 - a. Michael Jackson
 - b. Robert Palmer
 - c. MC Hammer
 - d. Phil Collins
2. 1991 saw the release of a new video produced by Al but not featuring him on screen. Was it:
 - a. Best of Fireside Theatre
 - b. Babalu Music
 - c. 50 years of ~~Dare~~ Net-a-great
(well, sort of great) Polka Music
 - d. Best of Phil Collins
3. In *UHF*, Philo mentions an "interociter". In the video, *Dare To Be Stupid*, Al operates one. What classic movie is the source of Al's interociter?
 - a. Forbidden Planet
 - b. This Island Earth
 - c. Mars Needs Women
 - d. Buster (featuring Phil Collins)
4. What was Al's major in college?
 - a. Architecture
 - b. Pre-Med
 - c. Home Economics
 - d. Phil Collins
5. What is Al's favorite kitchen utensil?
 - a. Mallet
 - b. Garlic press
 - c. Spatula
 - d. Phil Colander
6. In the music video *I Love Rocky Road*, Al wears a button supporting which classic television show?
 - a. Wonderful World of Phlegm
 - b. My Mother the Car
 - c. I Love Lucy
 - d. Live Aid - with Phil Collins
7. Name Al's favorite musical instrument.
 - a. Kazoo
 - b. Accordion
 - c. Baby Grand Piano
 - d. Phil Collins

8. What famous actor named *UHF* as his favorite movie?
- MacCauley Culkin
 - Tom Cruise
 - Kevin Costner
 - Phil Collins
9. Who of the following is not a member of Al's band?
- Bermuda Schwartz
 - Steve Jay
 - Jim West
 - Phil Collins
10. Al always asks for permission from the artist before he produces a parody song.
Only one celebrity has refused to give permission when asked. Was it:
- Bruce Springsteen
 - Prince
 - Sting
 - Phil Collins

ANSWERS

- d. Phil Collins – isn't it time he did, though?
- b. Babalu Music, a tribute to the classic songs in *I Love Lucy*.
- b. This Island Earth
- a. Architecture – just ask to see his design for the city of the future, "Burgeropolis!"
- c. Spatula – what better way to say I love you than with a spatula!
- c. I Love Lucy – what else?
- b. The accordion – could there be any other?
- a. MacCauley Culkin
- d. Phil Collins (I suppose this was an easy one!)
- b. Prince – some people have no sense of humor.

SCORING:

9-10 correct
7-8 correct
5-6 correct
3-4 correct
1-2 correct
0-1 correct

You worship Al
You follow Al
You kinda like Al
You've thought of Al
Why are you reading this newsletter?
You thought this was the Phil Collins newsletter.

Bonita Crider

DARE TO BE STUPID!

Everyone has had funny or embarrassing things happen to them - share it with us!

EXAMPLE: Our Put-Upon Lowly Scribe misspelled the name of the man we worship all the way through the first draft of this newsletter! How's that for embarrassing?

Stay tuned for more **DARE TO BE STUPID!**

MUSIC VIDEOS

So you want to do something Al-oriented, but different -- not just watching *UHF* for the umpteenth time, or rewatching *AL-TV* on *MTV*, or chortling over Al's contortions on that *Arsenio* interview. How about trying your hand at a fan video? (A fan video -- a.k.a. a songtape -- is a sort of do-it-yourself music video. You take a favorite song recording and combine it with appropriate clips from a favorite TV show, so that the music and the video complement each other.) Clear as mud, right?

I'll give you a couple of examples from existing songtapes. One uses *Eat It* and clips of assorted characters from a variety of different TV shows eating food. (Al's songs, like country-western songs, make great fan videos because the words are recognizable -- except for the occasional bargee nawdle zouss -- and form concrete images). For instance, the line "If it's getting cold, reheat it" is accompanied by a clip from *Magnum PI* where Magnum is taking a dish out of his microwave oven, and the other clips mesh equally well with the song. Another video takes a recording of Tom Lehrer's *New Math* and vintage *Star Trek* clips, mostly of Spock pontificating to Kirk, McCoy and the rest of the crew. The line with Lehrer singsonging "Now let's not always see the same hands" goes along with the scene from *The Naked Time* where Spock orders Uhura to take over the navigator's post and Lt. Kevin O'Reilly (of "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" fame) motions her to the chair, waving enthusiastically. Get the picture?

In short, a songtape is the Wrigley's gum of fan entertainment -- you take a favorite song and a favorite TV show and combine them, to "double your pleasure"

And now, having whet your appetite, I'll give you the recipe for making a perfect songtape. (First, a small confession. While I've collected many songtapes and am well-versed on the theory, I've never actually made a fanvideo myself, so please take my directions with a grain of salt.)

Ingredients:

1. A song on cassette, CD, or record
2. Videotape clips from a TV show or shows
3. Two blank videotapes
4. Access to two VCRs
5. Stopwatch or digital timer (anything that keeps track of seconds)
6. Time and Patience (lots of both)

Directions:

1. Once you've selected your song, it's a good idea to storyboard your idea, or make a written outline of your songtape. Type or write the words to the song, a phrase at a time, on a piece of paper. Use double- or triple-space so that there's room for you to jot down a short description of the video scene that matches the song at each phrase. Check the lyrics on the album/tape/CD cover to make sure the correct words are used -- especially if they're unclear on the recording. (Remember, you're trying to match words and feelings in the song with the video clips, so you need to start with the right words.)

You probably won't have a scene to match every phrase of the song off the top of your head, so writing everything down lets you know what scenes you still have to fill in. It may take a little time to fill in these gaps, and you may have to watch or scan several episodes before you find that one scene that fits perfectly. (This is why most people make fan videos of their FAVORITE shows, shows that they can cite scenes from chapter and verse, or that they don't mind watching several hours of, searching for the right clip.)

2. Listen to the song and time each phrase with your stopwatch so that you know how long each video fragment has to be to cover the phrase. Also note the length of any introductions and instrumental breaks in the song. Write down the length at the end of each phrase on your outline.

3. When you've got a complete outline of your songtape, begin collecting the scenes you've selected IN ORDER on one tape. Cue up the TV scenes you're going to use and record them onto a blank tape. Time the length of each scene so that it matches the corresponding phrase in the song. Record a few seconds past that point, then stop, put the next scene into the VCR, hit play and immediately record the next sequential scene onto the tape. The theory is that the few seconds lag time from the first clip are overlapped by the start of the second clip and you get a smooth transition from one scene to the next without the rainbow color bar that says to the world "this is where I added another scene". This is not the easiest thing to do the first time out, so you may end up erasing and retaping -- remember Ingredient #6.

4. Take the videotape of clips that you have created and record it onto the second blank tape WITH THE TV SOUND TURNED OFF. Simultaneously, you should have your record/cassette/CD playing LOUD enough that the VCR will pick up and record the music while it's recording the video scenes. Use the 'pause' button on the VCR so that you get a smooth overlapping of scenes onto the second, final tape and still have an even flow of music. THIS TAKES PRACTICE, and you'll have to experiment to see what works best for you.

5. Treat your friends to the finished product.

NOTE: For best quality results, do all recording in the two-hour mode. As direction #5 implies, fan videos are amateur productions made for personal enjoyment, and are usually obtained by sending the cost of a blank tape and postage to the videomaker and requesting a copy, or by swapping tapes. GOOD LUCK

Sue Wells

A FAN'S EYE VIEW

Weird Al Yankovic - Is he weird or what? When I met him I was very surprised at who he really was. This is what was running through my head. "Wow, what a great guy! He's such a crazy zany guy! I can't believe I'm really meeting him!"

I am really glad I met "Weird Al" because he's my favorite singer and I always wanted to meet him. Also he's such a great guy.

Brandon Lacy, Dec. 1992

If you have a few words to share with us about when you met Al, please let us know!



WHEN, WHERE, WHAT AL IS DOING NEXT

Al will play a hologram in a new PBS special called "Living and Working in Space". This is to be hosted by teacher Jaime Escalante (about whom the movie "Stand and Deliver" was made). PBS should be broadcasting this in February or March, 1993. Check your local listings.

It's interesting to see such a coincidence: Al will play a hologram for PBS, and another "Al" we can think of is already playing one on Quantum Leap! Ed.

FOR THE NEXT CONCERT:

Supply yourself with the necessities of life for the next "Weird Al" concert. Essentials:
A Kazoo
a Hawaiian shirt
a stethoscope
a Bic Lighter (*For You Don't Love Me Anymore*)
and. "Ding Dongs Man, Ding Dongs!"

Please write us! Add your thoughts to our columns and watch this newsletter grow!
Send your letters to:

THE MIDNIGHT STAR
9118 JUDWIN
HOUSTON, TX 77075

CIRCUS OF THE STARS

The Gannett News Service had this to say about "Weird Al's" performance:

CIRCUS OF THE STARS ranges from Linda Purl on an elephant to Weird Al Yankovic on a sway pole.

Now, that last part is really weird. "I guess it was a temporary lapse of sanity," Yankovic says.

When the idea came up, he didn't know what a sway pole was. "I never liked the circus as a kid."

So he was taken to the 65-foot peak. "Some celebrities get sick right then and forget it."

He survived and began practicing at about 10 feet. "That way, if I fell I'd just break every bone instead of getting killed."

Yankovic has done weirder things, of course.

A Los Angeles native (and no relation to polka king Freddie Yankovic), he played the accordion as a kid and had the good sense to hate it. "I started to like it when I could make up my own stuff."

A decade ago, his *Eat It* became the first of the great music-video parodies. "MTV had just started the year before, and I guess the timing was right."

He had another big success recently with *Smells Like Nirvana*. "There's always a place for weird guys with accordions."

VIDEO CONNECTION

The Video-Swapping Network



Dear VIDEO CONNECTION:

I am looking for any or all of Al's appearances on MTV's AL-TV. Anybody out there got a copy they wouldn't mind sharing? Please write the MIDNIGHT STAR and let me know!

Carlotta Barnes

To participate in VIDEO CONNECTION, please send your tape request to VIDEO CONNECTION, 9118 Judwin, Houston, TX 77075. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your request. If you are in possession of a requested tape, and don't mind swapping or copying your tape for others, please let us know in writing. Include your address and phone number, please. No money may change hands.

The columns on this page and elsewhere in the newsletter are examples of columns we wish to include in every issue of THE MIDNIGHT STAR. Please write in and add to them!



BARGLE NAWDLE, ZOUSS?

Letters from the Fans

Dear MIDNIGHT STAR: I love this newsletter. What a great idea -- a newsletter devoted to Al! I've loved Al ever since I first saw him. And his unusual but wonderful outfits. He's such a great sidekick for Sam Beckett on *Quantum Leap*!

Thanks -- I love it!

P. Collins

Obviously, this writer has his "Als" mixed up! Ed.

BARGLE, NAWDLE, ZOUSS? accepts just about all the letters we can get! Write in and see your name in print!

THE MIDNIGHT STAR
9118 Judwin,
Houston, TX 77075

POSTAGE

THE
Midnight Star

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT AL BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

